

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, US, IS, EG, FR, XF

SUBJECT: ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS' BRIEFING OF FRENCH
AMBASSADOR ON PREPARATIONS FOR CAMP DAVID SUMMIT

1. AMB. DE LABOULAYE CALLED ON ASST. SEC. SAUNDERS
AUG. 11 FOR A FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE LEBANESE SITUATION
(SEPTTEL) AND A BRIEFING ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE CAMP DAVID
SUMMIT. DE LABOULAYE SAID THE FRENCH HAD TOLD THE
EGYPTIANS THEY APPRECIATED SADAT'S REASONABLENESS AND WERE
HAPPY THAT THE SUMMIT WOULD TAKE PLACE. THEY WERE FOLLOW-
ING PREPARATIONS WITH GREAT INTEREST AND THAT WAS WHY HE
HAD COME TO SEE SAUNDERS.

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2. SAUNDERS SAID THAT WHILE WE WOULD USE THE COMING WEEKS
UNTIL THE SUMMIT TO FURTHER REFINE OUR THINKING, IT COULD
BE ROUGHLY OUTLINED AS FOLLOWS. PRESIDENT CARTER HAD
DECIDED THAT MINISTERIAL LEVEL DISCUSSIONS HAD GONE ABOUT
AS FAR AS THEY COULD WITHOUT DECISIONS ON KEY ISSUES THAT
CAN ONLY BE MADE AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL. HE HAD BEEN PRE-
PARED TO INVITE SADAT AND BEGIN TO A SUMMIT, ALTHOUGH WE

HAD HOPED THAT MINISTERIAL TALKS MIGHT HAVE MADE MORE PROGRESS FIRST. SINCE THIS HAD NOT BEEN POSSIBLE, THE PRESIDENT HAD DECIDED TO CALL A SUMMIT NOW. HIS HOPE IS THAT IF THE TWO LEADERS COULD TALK WITH HIM AND EACH OTHER

ABOUT THEIR POLITICAL PROBLEMS, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO GET FRESH INSIGHT INTO WHAT EACH SIDE NEEDED IN A SETTLEMENT.

3. THE U.S. CONSIDERS THAT RESOLUTION 242 REMAINS SACROSANCT AS THE BASIC FRAMEWORK TO WHICH ALL PARTIES AGREE. ELEVEN YEARS LATER, HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF FACTORS HAVE CHANGED. CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN WEST BANKERS AND ISRAEL WAS A FACT; SADAT HAD GONE TO JERUSALEM; AND THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT HAD TAKEN ON A MUCH LARGER POLITICAL DIMENSION THAN WAS ANTICIPATED IN 1967. THE QUESTION WAS HOW TO APPLY THE PRINCIPLES OF RESOLUTION 242 IN THIS NEW WORLD. IF SOME UNDERSTANDING COULD BE REACHED ON THIS BASIC QUESTION, THERE WOULD BE A FOUNDATION FOR FURTHER MEETINGS AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL.

4. THE PRESIDENT, SAUNDERS SAID, PLANS TO SPEND SOME TIME ALONE WITH THE TWO LEADERS DISCUSSING THESE ISSUES AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS. THE OPTIMUM OUTCOME WOULD BE A NARROWING OF DIFFERENCES ON FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES. THIS MIGHT PERMIT SMALLER ISSUES ON WHICH THERE WAS ALREADY
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CONSIDERABLE AGREEMENT TO FALL INTO PLACE IN LATER TALKS. IT WAS POSSIBLE, OF COURSE, THERE WOULD BE NO AGREEMENT, EVEN ON BASIC PRINCIPLES. IN THAT CASE, THE U.S. WOULD BE PREPARED TO HELP DEFINE AND SUGGEST COMMON GROUND. SADAT AND BEGIN MIGHT HAVE TO GO BACK TO THEIR RESPECTIVE CONSTITUENCIES BEFORE AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED. FINDING ANY COMMON GROUND AT ALL ON REMAINING DIFFERENCES WOULD BE AN ACHIEVEMENT.

5. AMB. DE LABOULAYE SAID THAT, FROM A PROCEDURAL ASPECT, IT WAS APPARENT THAT WE WANTED TO KEEP THE PROCESS OPEN-ENDED. DID WE THINK OTHER ARAB STATES COULD BE BROUGHT IN? SAUNDERS SAID WE HOPED WE COULD BRING IN HUSSEIN AND GET SAUDI SUPPORT.

6. AMB. DE LABOULAYE SAID THAT IF THE OBJECTIVE OF A SUMMIT WAS TO FIND OUT WHAT THE PARTIES NEEDED, OBVIOUSLY THIS APPLIED WELL TO SADAT. BEGIN, HOWEVER, HAD MORE THAN NEEDS; HE HAD DESIRES. ALL HE NEEDED WAS SECURITY, BUT HE ALSO WANTED NOT TO ABANDON THE PRINCIPLE OF SOVEREIGNTY IN THE WEST BANK. SADAT WAS STOPPING IN PARIS ON THE WAY TO CAMP DAVID, AND THE FRENCH WOULD NOT ADVISE HIM TO

ABANDON THE PRINCIPLE OF ARAB SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE WEST BANK. TO DO SO WOULD SPLIT THE ARAB WORLD IRREVOCABLY.

7. SAUNDERS SAID HE UNDERSTOOD, BUT IT MIGHT BE WORTH TALKING TO SADAT ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES: IF THE

ISSUE OF SOVEREIGNTY WERE FORCED TO A FINAL CONCLUSION NOW, THE ARGUMENT WILL BE OVER PARTITION OF THE WEST BANK. IF FINAL DECISIONS ON SOVEREIGNTY COULD BE PUT OFF THROUGH A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, AND A PALESTINIAN GOVERNMENT WERE INSTALLED DURING A FIVE-YEAR TRANSITION PERIOD BEFORE FINAL BORDERS WERE SETTLED, THERE MIGHT BE A DIFFERENT VIEW OF PALESTINIANS WHO HAD BEEN IN CONTROL OVER THAT PERIOD, PARTICULARLY IF THE PERIOD HAD BEEN PEACEFUL. THEN IT
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MIGHT BE EASIER TO SEPARATE SECURITY NEEDS FROM TERRITORIAL CLAIMS. PERHAPS A WAY NOW COULD BE FOUND TO CAPTURE THE PRINCIPLE THAT, WHILE MOST OF THE WEST BANK WOULD BE RETURNED TO ARAB SOVEREIGNTY, THE QUESTION OF FINAL BORDERS WOULD BE OPEN FOR NEGOTIATION.

8. DE LABOULAYE ASKED WHETHER PALESTINIANS ON THE WEST BANK WOULD LIVE UNDER PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY OR IN SOME SPECIAL STATUS. THE PRINCIPLE OF ARAB SOVEREIGNTY, HE ARGUED, WAS ALL IMPORTANT. SAUNDERS REPLIED THAT THE RIGHTS OF ISRAELI TROOPS AND LOCAL SECURITY FORCES WOULD HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY DELINEATED, BUT PRESUMABLY PALESTINIANS WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE TO THE AUTHORITY OF A PALESTINIAN GOVERNMENT. DE LABOULAYE SUGGESTED THE FORMULA THAT THE "ARAB CHARACTER" OF THE TERRITORIES SHOULD BE PRESERVED.

9. DE LABOULAYE ASKED WHAT THE SAUDIS HAD BEEN DOING IN RECENT WEEKS. SAUNDERS SAID THAT THE PUBLIC IMPRESSION THAT THEY HAD BEEN PRESSURING SADAT TO DROP HIS INITIATIVE WAS WRONG. THEY HAD BEEN WORRIED IT WOULD FAIL, AND HAD BEEN TRYING TO DEVELOP A SAFETY NET IN THE FORM OF SADAT'S RECONCILIATION IN THE ARAB WORLD IN CASE OF FAILURE. AMB. ATHERTON HAD BRIEFED KING KHALID ON THE SUMMIT PREPARATIONS AND THE SAUDIS HAD WARMLY WELCOMED THE IDEA OF A SUMMIT BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY. CHRISTOPHER

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